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The Dutch in America: Immigration, Settlement, and Cultural Change

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pers of elected officials. Readers familiar with the ways of American politics will appreciate the information in this book, but many will inevitably draw quite different conclusions from those offered by the authors.

Everett Dirksen was an unusually successful political leader. Like another Republican from Illinois one hundred years earlier, he knew how to exploit his own public image and had a marvelous sense of timing. But like most individuals who choose to run for elective office, he was also very ambitious, never hesitated to jump on the most useful bandwagon, and quickly learned to appreciate the rewards of power.

Dirksen changed his mind, compromised, negotiated, and supported measures unpopular in downstate Illinois, such as civil rights legislation, not only because he was a statesman, but because it allowed him to retain his leadership position and his power. Had he acted otherwise, would President Kennedy have encouraged his fellow Democrats in Illinois to abandon Congressman Sidney Yates when he challenged Dirksen in 1962? Would Johnson have accepted the amendments to his Great Society legislation if Dirksen had challenged the entire civil rights package? For that matter, what did Illinois gain in return? Missing entirely from this account is any mention of highways, defense contracts, urban redevelopment, water resource development, issues close to the heart of every elected representative.

Nevertheless, *Dirksen of Illinois: Senatorial Statesman* contributes to our knowledge of a formidable political leader and is one more welcome antidote to the emphasis on the presidency that has overtaken much of our political biography in recent years.

THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

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The Dutch in America: Immigration, Settlement, and Cultural Change, edited by Robert P. Swierenga. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1985. xv, 303 pp. Figures, tables, maps, notes, index. \$32.00 cloth.

Several features of this book put the reader on guard. First, it is the product of a conference, the scholarly commemoration of the Netherlands-American bicentennial in 1982. Who wants to read conference papers? What can the nonspecialist learn from listening to the conversations of thirteen scholars, men whose names, affiliations, and scholarly careers are testaments to their Dutch connections? Tight company, one suspects. Second, the thirty-seven tables and fifteen figures and maps that provide the data for scholarly dissection suggest, at

first glance, that there may be a lot of analysis here, but not much of a story.

The Dutch in America may not itself tell a story, but all the ingredients of a good story are here, and therein lies its usefulness and appeal. Indeed, the ingredients I look for in a story appear in abundance. Some of the essays examine the *origins* of the Dutch in America; some mark *milestones* in their life in the new land; still others explore the *dynamics* of their acculturation; and all of them, in one way or another, probe the *character* of the Dutch in the American context. Of such things are stories made.

That is not to say that the problems of a book like this are easily dismissed. It is a book about Dutch culture, and as anthropologists tell us, culture is "everything you need to know to be one of the folk." The authors of *The Dutch in America* are, without exception, "of the folk," as, no doubt, were most of the participants in the NEH conference where their work was initially presented. But most readers are not likely to be "of the folk," which leaves us at loose ends from time to time.

Editor Robert P. Swierenga opens the book with a fine introductory essay, outlining the book's four parts and providing abstracts of the essays in each one. His account of the tensions between the *Afscheiding* and *Doleantie*, groups divided by religious differences, seems to establish a theme, but later chapters do not elaborate on it, and that is a disappointment. Perhaps that is a story that those "of the folk" know all too well.

Part one examines the general patterns of nineteenth-century immigration. Swierenga's essay is as good an introduction to both the promise and the problems of using computerized data in historical analysis as one will find. He concludes that Dutch emigration "can best be understood as a series of local movements, a sort of migration chain, tying together specific Dutch villages and specific American communities" (32). The most salient feature of Dutch immigration, he demonstrates, is its rationality, a conclusion that is reinforced by Pieter R. D. Stokvis, who places migration to America in the larger context of Dutch migration between 1815 and 1910, and Hille de Vries, who looks at the effects of crises in agriculture in the Netherlands on migration patterns. If not all who left Holland came to America, as Stokvis shows, neither did all those who came form or join clannish communities like Pella, Iowa, and Holland, Michigan. Calvinists did it the ethnic way, Henry A. V. M. van Stekelenburg points out, but Catholics in a very short time found themselves "totally integrating in a church that was essentially different for all the nationals" (74). That is why it is not easy to find traces of Dutch Catholic immigrants.

The second part, dealing with community development and family migration, offers a sophisticated analysis of the effects of kinship on Dutch settlement in Wisconsin, a study of settlement patterns in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and, of greatest interest to readers of this journal, an essay on wealth mobility in Pella, Iowa, between 1847 and 1925. In that essay, Richard L. Doyle identifies a significant feature of the change that occurred in Pella, especially after 1870: it was not dramatic, he claims, for social stability remained Pella's hallmark. That stability was unquestionably accompanied by another Pella hallmark: achievement. Founded as the "city of refuge," it became a place of prosperity for transplanted Hollanders and their descendants.

The contributors to the third part of *The Dutch in America* examine religious and cultural adjustment and conflict. In one of the best essays in the book, Elton J. Bruins contends that "during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Americanization really consisted of a forced adaptation to the American scene in spite of all the immigrants' best efforts to remain thoroughly Dutch in their approach to church life" (175). But the force came as much from the inside of the immigrants' settlements (as under Hendrik P. Scholte in Pella) as from the large society to which they were accommodating. James D. Bratt shows that the accommodation brought conflict to the Dutch churches in the United States, but in Canada, Herman Ganzevoort points out, the ethnic identity of the Dutch virtually disappeared without contest.

The two essays in the final part, on literary culture and the popular press, round out this account of Dutch acculturation and assimilation in America. I suspect that Walter Lagerwey's translations of Dutch immigrant literature provided some of the most interesting moments at the conference in which all of these essays were presented.

One cannot but be impressed with the complexity of the story of immigrants to America and their eventual absorption into American life. Even when the focus is on immigrants from one country, terms like "mosaic" and "kaleidoscope," used by one of the contributors to this volume, are appropriate. *The Dutch in America* helps us both appreciate the story's complexity and understand it more fully.

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